MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life

IMPRESSIONS

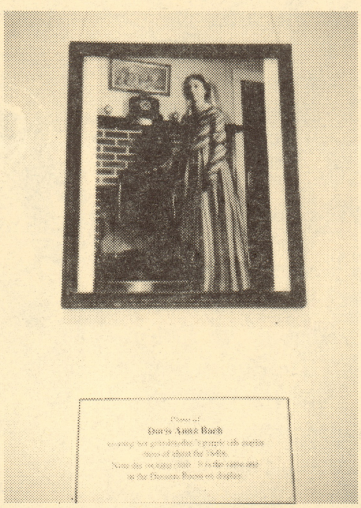
WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2001

New Exhibit Is Fantastic!

Scott Jacob has mounted a truly wonderful exhibit with the help of **Judy Chrisman** our Collections Chair. Entitled **"Ladies at Home,"** this exhibit illustrates the activities of women when their lives centered around the home. It includes dressmaking, gardening, cooking, and club activities. This exhibit will run until **Friday, June 15th.**

Our second exhibit will begin **Monday, June 18th** and will be up **until Friday, October 19th.** The theme will be "**Delivery Days**" and will be about things we used to get delivered to our houses—ice, milk, eggs, butter, laundry, etc. Our third exhibit will be on "**Commercial Christmas**" and will be up from **Saturday, November 3rd** until Christmas.

All exhibits will be open to the public on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from noon-4 and by appointment. Call (734) 662-9092. **We are in need of docents, so please contact us if you'd like to be a guide for an afternoon.**

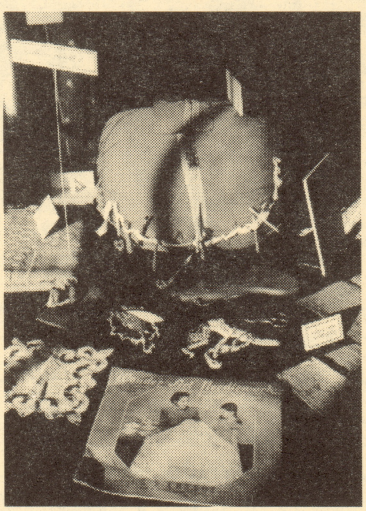


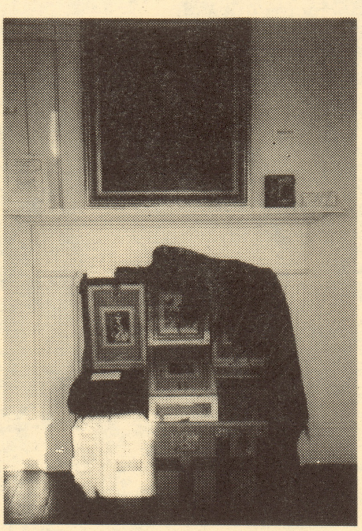
Left. **Doris Anna Bach in her grandmother's silk poplin dress of 1840. Photo ca. 1940.**

Top right. **Anna Botsford Bach's 1840 dress and tea table arrangement.** ***Photos by Susan Wineberg***

Right. **Needlework done by women in "Ladies at Home" exhibit.**

Bottom left. **Don't we all dream of finding an old trunk full of goodies?**





Museum Now Open!

The Museum now has regular hours. Come and visit us on **Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from noon-4.**

April Program

Dr. Patricia Whitesell will speak on the *History of the Detroit Observatory* on Sunday, Aprill 22nd at the Observatory. **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!** Call (734) 763-2230.

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Washtenaw County Has A New Facility

Photo: Susan Wineberg

Peggy Haines, Clerk/Register of Deeds, speaking about elections.

About 60 people attended an Open House at 200 N. Main and talk by **Peggy Haines,** Washtenaw County Clerk/ Register of Deeds. She was assisted by **Melanie Weidmayer,** Director of Elections, and **Tom Freeman,** Director of Facilities Management. Despite being on crutches from a broken leg and having to deal with an ailing mother, Peggy attended in her usual red, white and blue outfit and with a smile for everyone. She is a real trooper! Following the lecture, we had a tour of the new facility. For more information in detail on the county's activities, please check their website at **www.co.washtenaw.mi.us.** This is a goldmine of information!

Peggy began by telling us that this was her 41st year with Washtenaw County. She began in 1960 with the Register of Deeds, always the love of her life. She is excited to share the new records facilities with us, especially since many of us use them for genealogical purposes. Before the talk on elections, we heard from **Tom Freeman,** the Director of Facilities Management, who talked about the building we are in to day.

Tom welcomed us and noted that the building was dedicated in February 2001. It was quite a job moving all the records from the clerks and deeds office but they are now in a lovely spot and more usable than ever. His job is not only to manage the properties of the county, but to develop new facilities as well.

The property was acquired by the county in 1988 [it had been the site of the Salvation Army Red Shield Store, originally built as a Kroger. In the 19th century a wonderful Post Office Building stood on this site!] The new building, known as 200 N. Main (after much discussion), was intended to reunite three departments which had been split up for almost ten years: the clerk/vital records office, the Register of Deeds and the County Treasurer's Office. These offices have common purposes and common customers.

On the first two floors and basement are the Treasurer, County Clerk and Register of Deeds and they are completely open to the public. The Prosecuting Attorney's staff occupy the third and fourth floors. Though open to the public, they are more inaccessible for security reasons. One must take the elevator to these and enter a lobby from which you must be buzzed into the space. This protects witnesses, victims and others involved with the prosecutor's office.

Peggy introduced **Melanie Weidmayer**, the Director of Elections for Washtenaw County since 1998. Melanie noted that the county oversees all elections in the county. "We have had very few problems with voting especially since this year, with new software, the county was able to generate ballots in-house. Many errors were avoided by not having to send them out to a printer. Washtenaw County has 243,000 voters and 62% voted in the last presidential election. Unlike Florida, we had no dimpled chads or other problems with voting. Things went very smoothly and Michigan has very good laws on voting procedures and recounts. Our new software allows us to send our information to the printer over a high speed Internet connection. We are really wired!

This system also allows for better counting, especially with the Optical Scan system in use in the county except in Ypsilanti Twp. which still uses punch cards. There are two types of optical scan systems in use in the county. One involves filling in an oval while the other uses a line connecting an office with a name. The City of Ann Arbor and the City of Ypsilanti use the latter. The townships use the other system. All the returns were uploaded after the election, which was a real time saver! The new system also allowed Ann Arbor City to e-mail its returns to us. That was pretty exciting!

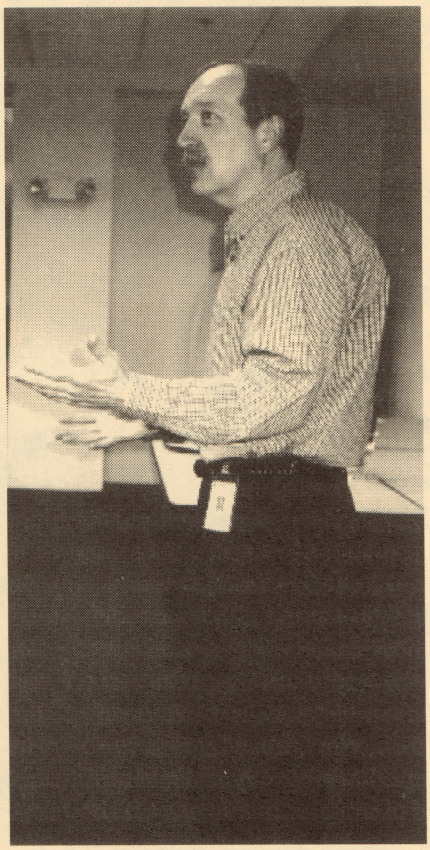


Photo: Susan Wineberg

Tom Freeman discusses the new county building at 200 N. Main.

The cost of the optical scan system is about $5,000 per precinct. Punch cards are cheaper but more problematic and require more paper. Optical scanners have a much higher accuracy level as well. We have not substantially reduced the cost of the ballots, but we have reduced the amount of time required to process them and this does save money."

Peggy and Melanie created an elections manual using the state's flip chart with their permission. This is Washtenaw's Election "Bible" and is used by elections inspectors throughout the county. Michigan is a Home Rule state, which means townships decide which type of voting to use. However, with the problems in Florida after the last election for President, a Blue Ribbon Committee appointed by. Gov. Engler is studying the idea of having everyone in the state using the same system. Another committee on Redistricting is proposing funding for a statewide voting system.

The floor was opened for questions and many asked about what different methods of voting are best. Melanie prefers the optical scan, especially since the touch-screen system costs $5,000 each and you have no paper trail. The optical scan also would pick up an erasure as an over-vote and this would allow an inspector to check it and make sure your intentions were reflected on the ballot. There is battery backup for these as well.

Melanie also assured everyone that Absentee Ballots are counted! These votes are sealed and are not opened until Election Day and they are sent to the precinct you vote in. The votes are verified and then they are counted. With optical scan, they are done during the day.

"Make sure that the oval and arrow connection is not on a fold, since the machine reads this as a vote. Sometimes machines don't like absentee ballots."

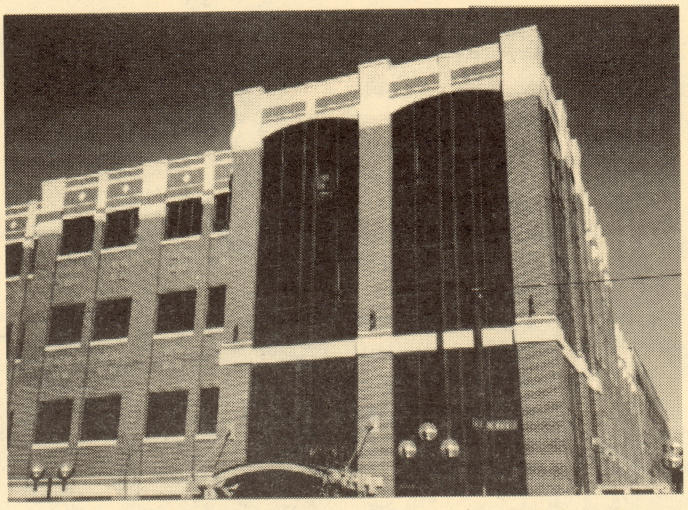


Photo: Susan Wineberg

Our newest county building at 200 N. Main, now home of clerk, vital records and register of deeds.

Peggy spoke again about what the responsibility of the county is, and what the Elections Division does. Anyone running for office must file an application through the county. The County Clerk is the filing official. Generally one files for candidacy within 2-3 months of an election. You must file an affidavit of identity, where you're registered to vote, and office you are filing for. The type of office determines whether a petition is necessary to get on the ballot. They changed the legislation last year, so the population of your district determines the number of names. After the filing deadline you have three days to change your mind! You also must file a campaign finance statement. "We are the filing official for the entire county for this and you must indicate whether you expect to receive or spend over $1,000 in your campaign. If so, you are responsible for reporting this."

The county also makes sure you are registered to vote. This has been made much easier by the new "Motor Voter" laws enacted by Michigan that has a Qualified Voter File. This was implemented in late 1998 and was accompanied by computers given to each township and county by the state with a population of 5,000 or more. This means eight townships in Washtenaw County did not get this system, and we keep their registrations current for them. All lists used on Election Day must be generated by the State Qualified Voter File. "We get about 15,000 voter registration cards a year and we have to go through them and determine which city and township those voters belong in and then report to the eight townships as well as compute totals for the county. The Qualified Voter File also prevents dead people from voting!"

In response to a question on how long your name stays on the rolls if you don't vote, the answer was 'forever.' A decade ago you were put on an 'inactive' file if you didn't vote in two elections, but this is no longer the case. There was also further discussion about the Motor Voter Law (April 2000) and how, say, a student registered in his hometown doesn't get to vote twice. Melanie answered that this law prevents voting twice by requiring that your place of voting match the place on your drivers license. If it doesn't, it defaults to where you register to vote. Your drivers license is also how you are picked for jury duty and is no longer based on voter registration. **Also note: whenever you move, you must change your voter registration since you will be**

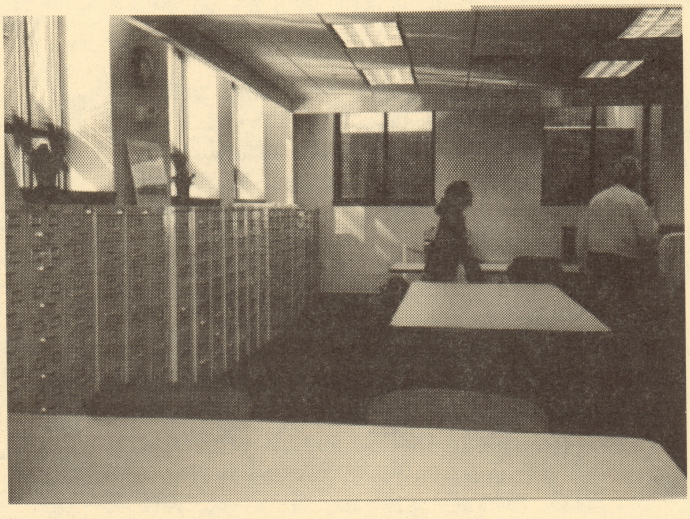


Photo: Susan Wineberg

Sunlight fills the new workspace for researching properties.

cancelled from your old one! This is also the case with changing your drivers license. Today, you will be asked when you get a drivers license, or renew, if you want to register to vote. They are required to do this at the Secretary of State's office. Also, regarding jury duty, you may be excused from jury duty when you reach the age of 70.

Peggy pointed out before the tour of the building that five separate units operate under the umbrella of the county clerk's/ register office. One of them is Elections, which Melanie so wonderfully discussed. A second is the Register of Deeds, which is on the first floor (though its records are on the lower or 'garden level'). The Register of Deeds is open daily from 8:30-5 and does not require an appointment.

The third is the Vital Records Division that maintains records of births, deaths and marriages, notary records, business names etc. There are special areas for use by genealogists must be by appointment. The number is **(734) 222-6730**. About 200 people a day use this office!

The fourth division is the Board of Commissioners for which we take minutes of Board Meetings and file all contracts for Washtenaw County. This is done through the Administrative Division of the office, which also issues gun permits.

The fifth division is Clerk to the Circuit Court. This division of the office remains at the county courthouse. As Clerk, we are responsible for filing all the documents that are involved in court cases in any courtroom where juries are involved. Today the courthouse is the home only of the courts, including juvenile court and probate court. The only entrance now will be the main entrance, as the Fourth Avenue entrance was deemed unsafe and is now closed. The Public Defender's Office will be moving to 110 N. Fourth, as more units move out of that facility to the new building on Zeeb Rd. in June.

Today we will only take a tour of this facility and Tom Freeman will lead us through the garden, first and second levels which contain the Vital Records and Register of Deeds offices.

Saline Celebrates Orange Risdon

Saline has been celebrating the life of its founder, **Orange Risdon,** with a two-part lecture series and a Founders Week Dinner at Weller's to be held on **April 25th.** Tickets for this dinner are $20 each and can be obtained by calling (734) 429-9621. Saline's former mayor and now councilman, Rick Kuss, lectured on the life of Risdon, beginning in Vermont and extending to California, as Risdon's descendants became 49ers. A hook-up with the historical society of Rupert, Vermont arranged by SAHS President Wayne Clements, gave us insight into the geographical and economic conditions from which Risdon came.

Photo by Robert Harriosn.

Rick Kuss speaking at the Saline Depot on Orange Risdon

The American Revolution had ended in 1783 and by 1785 many people were migrating to Vermont. Rupert was a boomtown and most of the settlers were from Massachusetts. It was an independent republic for 14 years and became a state in 1791. It was known as the 'reluctant republic.' Risdon was born in Rupert, VT. in 1786.

Orange Risdon's family left, however, and settled in Saratoga County, New York, just over the border. Orange's name is apparently derived from Orange County (there are Orange Counties in New York, New Jersey, Vermont, and California that we know of), and ultimately derives from the House of Orange in England. They later moved to Ballston Spa, NY and then on to LeRoy, NY (later the home of Jello). Risdon became a surveyor and helped survey Buffalo, NY. In 1816, he married Sally Newland and had six children. In 1823, Risdon went to Michigan as a surveyor. Rick Kuss read from two letters exchanged between Risdon and his wife (and now at the Bentley Library) dated August of 1825, before his permanent settlement in Washtenaw County.

Risdon's surveying skills were very useful in Michigan. He surveyed the Sauk Trail from Detroit to Chicago, now US-12, in the 1820s as well as other areas in Michigan including Saginaw. The Clements Library of the University of Michigan recently purchased his 1825 map of SE Michigan. This was the subject of an article by Grace Shackman in the December 2000 issue of the *Ann Arbor Observer.*

He eventually settled and platted Saline in 1832, giving the town the French name originally given to the river. His original plat is on display now at the Saline Depot Museum, with other artifacts on loan from the Washtenaw County Historical Society, including his saddlebags, and a high chair. Risdon was on the first Executive Committee of the Pioneer Society of Washtenaw County, organized in 1873. He also participated in the cornerstone laying ceremony for the new capitol in Lansing.

Risdon's sons John and Orange Jr., along with daughter Harriet's son Lewis Risdon Mead, went by covered wagon to California in 1849-50. As blacksmiths, they made tools for miners and eventually went into heavy equipment and formed a shipyard (Risdon Iron Works). Orange Jr. died young but John was so successful he developed a resort known as Byron Hot Springs. In the 1870s and 80s, this was THE place for 'taking the baths' in California. Facing hard times in the Depression, the resort became government property and was used an interrogation center for German and Japanese prisoners. After the war it was a religious mission, then closed. Today it

is a ruin, but may still have a future if renovated.

The **Saline Area Historical Society** has a wonderful exhibit about Risdon at its Depot Museum. On **Saturday, April 28th** from 11-4, they will celebrate Founders Day with a reenactment of historical methods of land surveying by the Michigan Museum of Surveying and Atwell-Hicks. They will also serve free hobo stew by the railroad tracks and have a bust of Risdon, maps, photos and memorabilia on display. In 1954 the Washtenaw Historical Society dedicated a plaque to Risdon at the Oakwood Cemetery. The plaque mysteriously disappeared long ago, and plans are afoot to replace it in the cemetery, along with a marker about Risdon along US-12.

Saline will also be re-opening the **Rentschler Farm Museum** on **Saturday May 19th** from 1—5. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the theme is **"Spring Babies"** and will focus on baby animals. The celebration will include free rides through town on the American Legion 40 & 8 Boxcar, children's games, draft horses, a bake and craft sale, marionette exhibit, and oral histories at the Saline Library (which hosts a website with 600 photos of historic Saline). There will also be 15 farm exhibits and docents will provide information about each room of the 1920s/30s farmhouse, especially those restored this past winter.

The farm is located at 1265 E. Michigan Avenue, just east of the Visteon Plant. Parking and admission are free. The farm complex consists of a Queen Anne style farmhouse built in 1906 and at least ten outbuildings. The farm will be open each Saturday except holidays from 11-3. For more information contact Agnes Dikeman at (734) 769-2219.

Congratulations are also in order! The SAHS was lauded for organizing the Curtiss Mansion Garden Party in the summer of 2000 by the **Historical Society of Michigan,** a statewide organization. This fundraiser involved over 500 people in an oral history tour of the 1875 mansion, a period meal, a booklet, and other history related activities. The $22,000 raised went to the Arbor Hospice, which had cared for Mary Curtiss Richards during her last illness. **Well done SAHS!**

Around The State

The **Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War** are inviting all interested parties to attend the **re-burial of Civil War veteran Daniel W. Pine,** on Saturday, May 12th, at l: 30 PM in the Hillcrest Memorial Park (1425 Elm Road), **Jackson, Michigan.** The GAR ritual for the Burial of the Dead will be used. This memorial will be at Mr. Pine's new gravesite in the Field of Honor. Call Bill Lowe at (517) 750-9138 or visit their website at **www.austinblair.com.**

A free visual genealogy exchange has been set up known as **Ancient Faces.** It has become the largest visual genealogy presence on the Internet by providing a free location for the exchange of photos. Over 3,000 have been scanned by their owners so that others researching their family trees can place faces with names! It is located at **www.ancientfaces.com** and is a free service. For more information contact Daniel J. Pinna, President at DJPinna@ancient faces.com. Ancient Faces is located in Santa Clara, CA.

The **43rd Annual Conference on Local History** will be held in Detroit at Wayne State University on April 20 and 21. Lunch speakers will be **Sandra S. Clark**, Director of the Michigan Historical Center and **Norman McRae** of the Detroit Historical Commission. Clark will discuss the contributions of local historical societies to the field of local history. The **Michigan Oral History Association** will sponsor a Saturday morning breakfast and a session on oral history. **Jim Cameron, Glenn Ruggles,** and **Virginia Bailey Parker** will be speaking. There will also be an oral history workshop in Novi on Saturday May 19th in sponsorship with the Novi Historical Society and Historical Commission ($35—reservations required). Registration for the two-day conference in Detroit is $10 and students are admitted free. The breakfast costs $10 and each luncheon is $12. For information contact Kathleen Mutch, (248) 349-6774 or Alberta Asmar (313) 577-4003.

The **Detroit Historical Society** announced that its **2001 Designer Showhouse** will be at the historic **Vaughan-Vernor estate** in Bloomfield Hills on **Saturday May 5th** to Sunday **June 3rd.** It is open from 10:30-5 PM and admission is $17.00. Call (313) 833-7935. The Vaughan house was **built in 1839** and is a Federal-style farmhouse located on four acres. It was the home of the Vernor Ginger Ale family from 1926-1941. Believe it or not, the historic church tours in May and June are already sold out! However, on **Sunday June 10,** join the society in a Sunday Stroll through **Elmwood Cemetery** at the cost of $10. And on Saturday and Sunday **June 16-17, tour Frank Lloyd Wright's Affleck House** in Bloomfield Hills for $25. The big date this year, however, is **July 22,** when the **Festival at the Fort at Historic Fort Wayne** opens to celebrate **Detroit's 300th birthday.** There will be a **parade of historic ships** on the Detroit River, civil war re-enactors, tours of the **Commanding Officer's quarters** and the **Star Fort,** as well as of the **Tuskegee Airmen Museum.** This free event will have food on-site and parking will be $5.00/vehicle. For more on Detroit visit their website at **www.detroithistorical.org.**

The **Historical Society of Michigan** Newsletter reports that **Margaret Dunning** contributed $1million to the **Plymouth Historical Museum** for a two-story 9,800 square foot addition. This will provide space for the **Weldon Petz Abraham Lincoln Collection** and much needed storage. Dunning's mother was a founding member of the Museum.

Knapps Points Update

Esther Warzynski reports we have collected about 3700 Knapps Points. Thank you one and all. Please keep sending them to her at 1520 Martha Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. We will be using them to purchase more shelving for storing our collections.

Around The County

The latest newsletter from the **Washtenaw-Potawatomi Land Trust** was full of exciting news. WPLT has acquired its third and largest nature preserve, a 57.5-acre property in Sharon Township to be known as the **Sharon Hills Preserve.** The property borders Sharon Hollow Road and is on the western edge of the rolling Sharon Short Hills. The donors require that the land be "used and perpetually maintained for a nature preserve, limited to passive, quiet, non-vehicular uses." WPLT also completed its first easement in **Bridgewater Township** and another riverfront easement in **Scio Township.** They also reported receiving several large donations, including an unsolicited check for $50,000, which was followed by another unsolicited check for $32,000! Part of their ability to reach potential donors was the success of Proposal B last November. Executive Director **Barry Lonik** has also met with 20 farm families and helped submit 31 applications to the State for its farmland preservation program. Though the state can only help 25-30 farms throughout the state, it is hoped that 3-4 Washtenaw County farms will be selected. For more information call **(734) 426-3669** or e-mail *Blonik13@aol.com.*

Preservation Eastern at Eastern Michigan University will be sponsoring a talk by **State Archaeologist John Halsey**. He will speak on "*Fayette from an Archaeological Viewpoint"* on Monday **April 16th at 4:15 PM** in the McKenny Union.

On Saturday April 21, Milan will be the site of the **Fourth Annual Antique Tractor Show.** It is held at Mullin's Auto Supply, 630 County St. from 8-4pm and is free. Call (734) 439-7270.

On **Saturday April 28th**, The **Ypsilanti Civil War Muster and Soldier School** will be held at Riverside Park. This is a free event. Call **(734) 483-4444**. Also in **Ypsilanti,** The **Fire Station Museum** will hold open houses **on Sundays May 6 and 13th** from 2-5 PM. Antique equipment is housed in the 1898 building at 110 W. Cross St. For more info call **(734) 547-0663.** The **Yankee Air Museum in Ypsilanti** will be holding a pancake breakfast **on May 28th** from 9-noon before exploring the **War Birds of World War II**. Check out a B-17, C-47 and several other planes. A memorial service will be held at 1 PM. There is a charge for the breakfast. Call (734) 483-4030.

Our friends in **Dexter** are busy trying to raise money to buy **Gordon Hall and its 70 acres** from the University of Michigan. The University will be accepting sealed bids in June and have the property sold by the fall. The Dexter Area Historical Society is accepting donations! Contact them at **(734) 426-4714 or (734) 426- 2519**. Send donations to 3443 Inverness St, Dexter MI 48130. The Dexter Area Chamber of Commerce will hold its **ice cream social** on **Saturday May 19th** at Monument Park in downtown Dexter. This free event lasts from 11-5. Call (734) 426-0887.

On **Sunday April 22nd**, the **Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County** will have **Sharon Brevoort** discussing *"Pre-Revolutionary Research in New York and New Amsterdam."* Marcia McCrary will do the class on *"Gone by Not Forgotten: A look at different kinds of death records."* On **Sunday May 20th**, **Jasper Pennington** will discuss "*Researching Church Records"* and the class discusses "*There are no Dumb Questions in Genealogy #4."* All lectures are at the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Building, 5301 E. Huron River Drive. Use Parking Lot P. Call (734) 483-2799 for more information.

Membership

Pauline Walters reports we have 419 paid members. This includes 368 regular members, 12 patrons, 14 businesses, 2 business patrons and 21 life members. We also have 71 people who contribute money without joining the society and one in-kind donation. Thank you all for renewing your membership or joining us in our mission to display and interpret the history of the county!

Future Programs

Sunday • April 22nd

(note change of date due to Easter)

The **U-M Observatory** will host a tour for us and Director **Dr. Patricia Whitesell** will speak on "*The History of the U-M's Detroit Observatory."* ***PLEASE NOTE THAT RESERVATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED SINCE ONLY 40 CAN BE ACCOMMODATED***. Phone (734) 763-2230 or e-mail DetroitObservatory @umich.edu by Friday April 20th. Dr. Whitesell was recently awarded the 2001 Herbert C. Pollack Award of the Dudley Observatory for her project on Franz Brunnow. Congratulations!

Wednesday • May 16th

Our **Annual Meeting** and **Potluck Dinner** will be held at 6 PM at **Webster Church** in Webster Township. Our speaker will be **Willah Weddon** of Stockbridge. A former journalist with the *Ypsilanti Press, Jackson Citizen Patriot, Lansing State Journal* and *Detroit Free Press,* she was a member of the Capitol Press Corps in Lansing and wrote about the First Ladies of Michigan. She has published four books on the First Families of Michigan and has won many awards for her publications.

Saturday • June 2nd 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Our **Annual Bus Tour** will visit **Cranbrook** including **Saarinen House** and the **Art Museum**. The cost will be **$60.00** and will cover the bus, the tour and a lunch. Reservations must be made by May 28th. Some walking will be required. Details will be in later *Impressions.*

How To Join

Send name, address and phone number with check payable to WCHS to: Treasurer, WCHS, P O Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336. Annual dues are individual, $15; couple/family $25; student or senior (60+) $10; senior couple $19; business/association $50; patron $100. For information call (734) 662-9092 or e-mail us at WCHS MoMS@aol.com.

Around The Town

Ann Arbor is a bustling place with too many things vying for our attention. But a worthwhile goal should be a visit either to **Cobblestone Farm** for its Celebration of Spring on Sunday, **April 29th** (1-5) or to the **Detroit Observatory** on Wednesdays **May 2** (3-5 PM), **May 23** (11-2 PM) and **June 13** (3-5) as well as Tuesday **June 26** (11-2). The tour of the 1854 Observatory is a window back to the mid-19th century when this state-of-the-art astronomical observatory on the Michigan frontier provided accurate time for the Great Lakes Region, determined the longitude of Ann Arbor and Detroit for the U.S. Lake Survey, and discovered 21 minor planets and a comet. The Observatory is closed in July and August. It is located at E. Ann and Observatory. Call (734) 763-2230. The 1840s Cobblestone Farm is located at 2781 Packard Road, (734) 994-2928. There is a $2.00 charge per person or $8.00 per family. There will be animals to pet and two baby ducks on display.

Hugh Gurney, Executive Director of the **Historical Society of Michigan**, has announced his **plans to retire.** After five years of devoting himself to Society business, he'd like to step back and take time to review life options. He will continue until a successor is named. Interested applicants can send a resume and cover letter to the Search Committee, 1305 Abbott Road, Suite 105, East Lansing, MI 48823. The deadline was **March 15,** but we received our notice late, so perhaps the deadline has been extended.

The **Nichols Arboretum** has announced its spring schedule. **Restoration Workdays,** typically the second Saturday of each month, will be held **April 7** and **May 12** from 9 AM until noon. This is open to anyone who wants to help restore natural habitats in the Arb. On **Sunday May 6th at 10 AM** is the Fourth Annual **Poets' Walk** with **Richard Tillinghast and Keith Taylor** leading a magical walk with words in the woods! On Saturday **May 19th,** at sunrise, birders **Dea Armstrong** and **Michael Kielb** will host the **Arb Birdathon**, a fun fundraiser for bird habitat. For more information call (734) 998-9540, e-mail Arb@umich.edu or check their website at **www.umich.edu/~wwwarb.**

House Update

Karen O'Neal reports that Paul Davis Restoration will replace the gutters and repaint the interior of the museum. All damage by the snows of 2000 will be covered by our insurance. Karen also reports that W.A.P. John of Grafaktari has submitted proposals for new signs that he plans to donate to us. We are also beginning to see some movement on getting lights for the outside of the Museum. Teri Jefferson is working on a leaded copper repro lantern design for our front posts and for the back as well. Work is also progressing on solving our perpetual drainage problem. More to follow next month.

Condolences

Unfortunately we have another death to report this month. Former WCHS Board Member and retired EMU Librarian **Albert Prince ("A.P.") Marshall** died March 9th at his home in Ypsilanti after a long battle with diabetes and cancer. Marshall was 86. He was a professor until 1980 when he retired and was active in the American Library Association. Marshall also had his own publishing company—-Marian Publishing—-which issued half a dozen books dealing with African-American history. They included "**Unconquered Souls: The History of the African-American in Ypsilanti," "The Real McCoy of Ypsilanti" and "Helen Walker McAndrew, Ypsilanti's Lady Frontier Doctor."** We extend our condolences to his family.

Collections Keep Growing

Judy Chrisman reports the receipt of an 1863 token from the CH Millen Company in Ann Arbor donated by **G. Ray Ashton Jr.** of Sarasota, Florida; three pamphlets from the Mack and Co. Dept Store of Ann Arbor donated by **Art French;** several items relating to Chelsea, Michigan from **Susan Wineberg**; and an 1874 Washtenaw County Atlas from John Devall. **Ruth Husung** also donated a World War I flag from her father's casket. Thanks to all who keep us in mind before throwing things in the trash! Judy has also mounted a small exhibit in our case at the **Washtenaw County Administration Building** on N. Main (the old post office). Check it out next time you're in the neighborhood.

Brainstorming Session Held

After our regular meeting on Sunday March 17th, we held a brainstorming session to chart the future of the society and the museum. **Ina Hanel,** a former Vice President and Program Chair of WCHS, guided us. Ina solicited our input on the strengths and weaknesses of the society. Over a two-hour period we hashed out our problems and accomplishments. We need to reactivate several committees including finance, membership, fundraising, and publicity. We will also update our brochure, establish a website, and perhaps have a summer issue of *Impressions.* We would like to expand our membership, establish more contacts with the schools and coordinate more with other county historical societies. It's a tall order for sure! Many thanks to Ina Hanel for all her help in guiding us (and her patience which was often taxed!), to **Patty Creal** for the delicious soup, and **Jan Azary** for the sheet cake (for John Geddes 200th birthday) and cookies.

Geddes Family Update

The publication of the Geddes family letters has had many wonderful ramifications. On March 19th, members of the Board celebrated the **200th birthday of John Geddes** with Russell Bidlack in Geddes' own house in Ann Arbor Township on East Huron River Drive, now the home of our Education Liaison Sally Silvennoinen. John also received a cake at our program meeting on Sunday the 18th thanks to Jan Azary. It was truly a wonderful experience for all of us who attended and could sit in John's 1837 house and wish him a happy 200th!

We also learned that **Webmaster for Washtenaw GemCom, Denise Frederick** of Petoskey Michigan, has access to **John Geddes' diaries** which she has been posting on the web. A sticker on the front of the Impressions informs our readers of this website **http://members.tripod.com/~deemamafred/gedind.html**. Ms. Frederick will be visiting Ann Arbor in April to continue her research on the Geddes family and meet Russell Bidlack.

Since our March Impressions were posted on the web, we've been hearing from many relations to John Geddes. One was from Paul "Dean" Sawyer, the 8th generation gr grandson of William Sawyer, ancestors of John's mother Jane Sawyer. He lives in Forty Fort, PA and wished to secure a signed copy of the document claiming that the common ancestor William came from Bristol England. So, our *Impressions* reaches out now beyond the confines of Washtenaw County!

Business Support

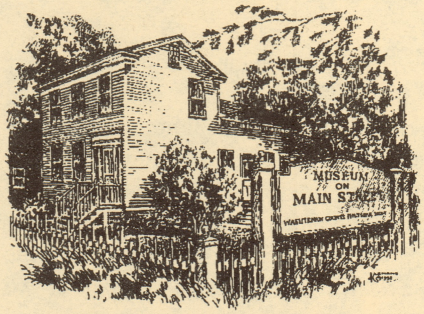
This month's issue of *Impressions* is co-sponsored by

RUSSELL BIDLACK

Slate For Elections At Annual Meeting

The following people will be nominated for WCHS offices at the Annual Meeting in May: **President, Pauline Walters; Vice-President, Virginia Hills; Recording Secretary, Judith Chrisman; Treasurer, Patricia Creal; Recording Secretary, Carol A. Birch.**

The following board members need to be re-elected to a three-year term: **Rosemarion Blake, Patricia Thompson, Pam Newhouse and Esther Warzynski.** Others who have agreed to serve who do not need to be re-elected are **Louisa Pieper, Program and Susan Wineberg, *Impressions* Editor.**



WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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